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PROVISIONAL VERBATIM RECORD OF THE EIGHTH MEETING

Held at Headquarters, New York,
on Wednesday, 26 September 1990, at 10 a.m.

President:	Mr. de MARCO	(Malta)
later:	Mr. REZEK (Vice-President)	(Brazil)

- General debate [9] (continued)

  Statements made by

  Mr. Genscher (Federal Republic of Germany)
  Mr. Hurd (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland)

- Address by Mr. Cavaco Silva, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic

- Address by Mr. Kebich, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic

- General debate [9] (continued)

  Statement made by:

  Mr. Kasim (Jordan)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

AGENDA ITEM 9 (continued)

GENERAL DEBATE

The PRESIDENT: I should like to remind representatives that, in accordance with the decision taken by the General Assembly at its 3rd plenary meeting, congratulations should not be expressed in the General Assembly Hall after a statement has been delivered.

In this connection, may I also remind representatives that, in accordance with another decision taken by the Assembly at the same meeting, speakers in the general debate, after delivering their statements, should leave the Assembly Hall through Room GA-200 at the rear of the podium before returning to their places.

Mr. GENSCHER (Federal Republic of Germany) (spoke in German; English text furnished by the delegation): I wish first of all to offer you, Mr. President, my warm congratulations on your election to your high office. You are guiding the foreign policy of a country with which we have close, friendly relations. We are partners with Malta in developing security and co-operation in Europe. With you as its President this session of the General Assembly is in good hands.

I wish as well to express my thanks to your predecessor, Ambassador Joseph Garba, for the way in which he conducted his presidency.

Our special thanks and appreciation go to the Secretary-General. We are determined to continue to support his courageous and far-sighted initiatives. You, Mr. Secretary-General, have opened up new ways in which the United Nations can successfully perform its peace-keeping role.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

I take great pleasure in the fact that Liechtenstein, a neighbour with whom we have a close relationship, has become the youngest member of this family of nations.

I extend a cordial welcome in this Assembly to the representative of Namibia, a country with which we are closely associated by virtue of our history, our friendship and our joint efforts to secure its independence.

We warmly congratulate our friends the people of Yemen on having achieved unity. We sincerely hope that the Korean nation, too, will soon be able to overcome its division.

I welcome the statement of fundamental significance made by my Italian colleague, Mr. De Michelis, on behalf of the European Community. He spoke in our name as well.

Over the past year the situation in Europe, and with it the situation in Germany, has undergone fundamental change. Never has it been more obvious how closely Germany's fate is linked with that of Europe. The unity of Germany is a step towards the unity of Europe. The third of October 1990 will be the day of German unity. To us Germans, this will be a day of rejoicing, gratitude and reflection. Our long-cherished desire to unite in peace and freedom will be fulfilled. This is a source of great pleasure for us. The world is following the unification of Germany with good will, sympathy and friendship. For this we are deeply grateful.

In this historic phase, the Germans are filled with a sense of history and responsibility; they are not being carried away with nationalistic exuberance. We will not forget the endless suffering that was brought upon the nations of Europe and the world in the name of Germany. We commemorate all the victims of war and tyranny. We recall, especially, the untold suffering inflicted upon the Jewish people. We are aware of our responsibility and we accept it. To the General

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

Assembly of the United Nations I address this message: We Germans are united in the determination that none of this must ever be allowed to happen again.

Our nation will live united again in one democratic State. That State, our common State, will be founded on respect for inalienable human rights. Only peace will emanate from German soil. For all time, the principles enshrined in our Constitution, human rights and human dignity, democracy and the rule of law, social justice and respect for creation, peace and good-neighbourly relations will govern our thoughts and our actions.

As an equal partner in a united Europe, we are resolved to serve world peace. This commitment, which is embodied in the preamble to our Basic Law, determines our policy. It is a rejection of power politics; it implies a policy based on responsibility.

Ever since it joined the United Nations, the Federal Republic of Germany has demanded in this world forum the unification of our indivisible nation. Every year since 1974, I myself have declared in the General Assembly our determination to work for a state of peace in Europe in which the German nation would recover its unity in free self-determination.

On every such occasion, I also had in mind the Germans living in the region I personally come from, the German Democratic Republic. I knew they longed for German unity just as much as we in the Federal Republic of Germany, but they were not able to express their feelings and views here in this Assembly of the United Nations. Now, however, they have demonstrated their commitment to freedom and unity. Together with them, we now rejoice in German unity. We know that it will bring unity for Europe, too. So today, united in heart and in will, we greet the nations of the world.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

This occasion fills me with deep gratitude, gratitude which I also extend to my colleagues James Baker, Roland Dumas, Douglas Hurd and Eduard Shevardnadze who, especially in recent months, have done so much to help us achieve this objective.

The recollection of last year's session of the General Assembly indicates the problems we had to solve. At that time, we were still involved in laborious negotiations to open the door to freedom for the thousands of Germans confined in our embassy in Prague.

My thanks goes out also to the courageous Hungarian people, who were the first to lift the iron curtain.

We Germans realized all along that only peace and the ending of Europe's division could lead to the unification of our country. We seized the opportunities for co-operation. We renounced the use or threat of force and have kept that pledge. We banked on the peace-inspiring strength of human rights and fundamental freedoms. We established a political order based on freedom in the Federal Republic of Germany.

With the support of our friends and partners, we regained the confidence of the nations of the world, and thus established one of the foundations for German unity. Milestones along the road are the Federal Republic's membership in the Council of Europe, the Western Alliance and the European Community. By taking these steps, we returned to the community of democracies.

Through the treaties of Moscow and Warsaw and the treaty with Czechoslovakia, the foundations were laid for a new relationship with our Eastern neighbours. And the basic treaty with the German Democratic Republic created a modus vivendi between the two German States for the time the nation remained divided.

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(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

That German treaty policy also opened the way to the Helsinki Final Act. The momentum of the process of the Committee on Security and Co-operation in Europe and the radical reforms in the Soviet Union under the leadership of Mikhail Gorbachev ultimately made it possible to end Europe's and hence Germany's division.

The peoples of Central and Eastern Europe chose the path of peaceful revolution leading to freedom and democracy. Each of their decisions was a decision in favour of Europe. Through their peaceful revolution the Germans now uniting with us have demonstrated to the whole world their belief in freedom, in unity and democracy, and hence in Europe.

We thank our friends and allies in the West. They have stood by our side in good and in difficult times. To the American people in particular I wish to say: we shall never forget the airlift to Berlin.

On the eve of German unification we convey our thanks to President Bush, President Mitterrand and Prime Minister Thatcher for their support, their statesmanly far-sightedness and their understanding of our nation's longing for unity.

We thank our friends in the European Community headed by the President of the Commission, Jacques Delors, and we thank our friends all over the world.

We are grateful to President Gorbachev. His courageous policy has opened Europe's way to a new future and given Germany the chance to recover its unity in freedom. This also means a great deal for the future of German-Soviet relations.

We Germans want nothing other than to live in freedom and democracy, in unity and peace with all our neighbours. In the Treaty on the Final Settlement with respect to Germany, which we signed in Moscow on 12 September, with France, the

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

Soviet Union, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, we Germans reaffirmed the united Germany's responsibility for peace.

With our policy we aim to set a good example. We reaffirm our renunciation of the manufacture of, possession of and control over nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. We renew our commitment to the rights and obligations arising from the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. Our decision to reduce the personnel strength of the armed forces of the united Germany to 370,000 is a significant German contribution to extensive disarmament in Europe.

The united Germany has no territorial claims whatsoever against other States and will not assert any in the future. The inviolability of national borders is a corner-stone of Europe's peaceful order. The united Germany will confirm the existing German-Polish border in a treaty that is binding under international law. Our relationship with Poland is a special manifestation of our European calling. We therefore intend to establish in an additional, comprehensive treaty the basis for a new chapter of good-neighbourly relations between Germans and Poles. Germany recognizes and accepts its responsibility to help build a better future for Europe. We want, not a German Europe, but a European Germany.

We belong to the European Community. On 1 January 1993 the common European internal market will have been completed. It will be an open market and thus generate fresh impulses for the world economy.

We want the European Community to be an economic and monetary union and a political union. As the European Community's identity grows on the way to European union, we do not want the Atlantic to grow wider. A transatlantic declaration by the European Community and the North American democracies will add a new quality to our community based on common values and a common fate.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

The more quickly we achieve European union the more we foster the unification of the whole of Europe. On the path to European union the European Community is already becoming increasingly attractive to the whole of Europe. The nucleus of this unique link between the European democracies is the close Franco-German friendship. We pledge ourselves to that friendship as one of the permanent foundations of all German foreign policy. On 3 October 1990 all Germans will be bound up in the European Community and in the Franco-German friendship. The sovereign, democratic and free Germany will be committed to unity, stability and progress in the whole of Europe.

The united Germany will carry greater weight. With it we shall not strive for more power but shall be conscious of the greater responsibility such additional weight implies. We shall accept this responsibility in Europe and around the world. We shall place our weight on Europe's scales in such a way that it will benefit all nations on our continent and hence the whole of mankind. In this way we shall help Europe meet its responsibility in shaping the emerging new world order. Our conduct will bear out all those who confidently support the process of German unification.

A new concept of the coexistence of nations is taking shape. It is based on the awareness of the global challenges and of global interdependence. It takes into account the world's responsibility for future generations. It is the concept of equal rights for large and small nations, of limiting national powers through the transfer of sovereign rights to community institutions, of the interlocking of economic interests, of regional solidarity and interdependence. This concept and not yesterday's policy based on hegemonic aspirations and equilibrium is the model for stability and prosperity in the Europe and in the world of tomorrow.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

We Germans are contributing our regained sovereignty to that concept. To Europe this means that the ideological causes of tensions must not be supplanted by new ones resulting from different standards of living. Now that the wall has come down and the iron curtain has been lifted we do not want new divisions to take their place, divisions arising from poverty, social injustice or the disparate treatment of nature.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

The whole continent must be committed to parliamentary democracy, respect for human rights, the principles of social market economy, social justice, protection of the natural sources of life and the peaceful coexistence of nations. Only in this way can the one Europe emerge.

Over 40 years of division have left scars in Germany and Europe; the healing of those scars will require great political and economic efforts.

We regard our contribution to the reconstruction of Europe as an investment in the future of our own nation as well as in that of Europe. In this we perceive our European calling - the European calling of us Germans. The unification of Germany will not cause us to forget the aim of unifying the whole of Europe.

Our aim is a Europe based on solidarity and partnership which will fulfil the expectations of all European peoples. Solidarity and partnership must prevail, not rivalry and hegemony.

The establishment of a sound political, economic, social and ecological framework for the process of transformation in Central and Eastern Europe is the main objective of a stability-oriented European policy in which the military factors increasingly lose their significance.

Our economic and political weight and our position at the centre of Europe place a special responsibility on us Germans in this respect and we are facing up to this responsibility.

In this connection, we have always been aware that the Soviet Union belongs to Europe. Without the Soviet Union there can be no united Europe.

With the German-Soviet Treaty on Good-Neighbourly Relations, Partnership and Co-operation, which was initialed in Moscow recently, the two countries intend to shape their future together. We want to be able to trust one another in every respect. The Treaty affords the basis for this.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

Other members of the European Community also are negotiating co-operation agreements with the Soviet Union. Through such close co-operation with the members of the European Community, the Soviet Union is tying its future to that of Europe.

The international economic and financial institutions will also have to take this new development into account. New thinking is called for everywhere.

We are also seeking close co-operation with all our neighbours in Central and South-eastern Europe, with which we have many traditions and interests in common.

The ending of the East-West confrontation and the development of a new relationship between the member States of the two alliances open the way for a new system of co-operation in Europe in the field of security as well. The changing North Atlantic defence alliance and the European Community, to which the united Germany too will belong, as well as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) will be pillars of this new system. They will be pillars of a new development in which military security will be complemented by a broader and more solid foundation for co-operation aimed at safeguarding peace. The members of both alliances no longer regard each other as adversaries, nor as a threat.

Fifteen years ago the 35 signatories of the CSCE Helsinki Final Act pledged themselves to freedom, democracy and respect for human rights. Developments since then have borne out that bold decision of 1975. The summit conference due to be held in Paris on 19 November will raise the CSCE process to a new level and create the first common institutions of the new, the one, Europe.

Regular meetings of Heads of State and Government and of Foreign Ministers, a centre for conflict prevention and a secretariat will provide the first, solid foundations for a lasting peaceful order throughout Europe based on co-operation.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

A new, grand perspective is opening up for Europe. As a country situated in the centre of Europe the united Germany, aware of its pan-European responsibility, will do everything possible to ensure that this perspective becomes a reality for all Europeans.

The CSCE in Europe is developing, step by step, with our active participation, into a system of European co-operation, security and stability. The North American democracies are involved in this process as natural and important partners. The fact that the CSCE Conference of Foreign Ministers is to place here, on American soil, next week is of symbolic importance.

Disarmament and the creation of co-operative security remain the key to the common European house. The disarmament negotiations must keep pace with the dynamic political developments. The pending conclusion of the Vienna negotiations on conventional disarmament will have to be followed as soon as possible by negotiations aimed at eliminating short-range nuclear missiles. Further steps to reduce forces are necessary. We urge the overdue conclusion of a convention providing for a global ban on chemical weapons. These barbaric means of destruction must be eliminated worldwide. By reducing their nuclear weapons, the super-Powers are meeting their obligations to mankind. The universal validity of the non-proliferation Treaty must be assured for the sake of man's survival. Co-ordinated international efforts are needed to prevent the dissemination of delivery systems for nuclear, biological and chemical weapons.

But disarmament measures do not automatically remove armament factories. Economic expediency must never be accepted as justification for the manufacture of weapons which threaten peace in other parts of the world. The third world must no longer be the market for armaments which disarmament agreements in Europe have made

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

redundant. Consequently, future disarmament agreements should bind contracting parties to use surplus capacities for peaceful purposes.

For years we have been calling for greater transparency with regard to exports of weapons. Now this matter is acquiring greater urgency and receiving support. I welcome Foreign Minister Shevardnadze's initiative in this respect. The compulsory registration of arms exports with the United Nations should be introduced immediately and all violations of this requirement should be severely punished.

The conversion of armaments factories to the production of civilian goods is a global task in the cause of peace. We are prepared to co-operate with any nation in this new and important field of international security.

We observe the signs of a new age not only in Europe but also in the efforts to solve regional conflicts - from Central America to Afghanistan, from Cambodia to Korea.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

In the Middle East, the right of self-determination of the Palestinian people has to be reconciled with Israel's right to exist and its security. In the Republic of South Africa the aim is to overcome inhuman apartheid. We hope the dialogue between the representatives of the black majority and those of the white minority, with the aim of completely removing apartheid, will quickly prove successful.

We condemn Iraq's aggression against its Arab and Islamic neighbour, against a Member of the United Nations, Kuwait. The community of nations cannot tolerate the invasion and annexation of a country. The human rights of innocent people of all nations have been violated. There is no justification and no excuse for such conduct. Aggression must be treated as aggression, blackmail as blackmail, and the violation of human rights must be treated as the violation of human rights if the world's sense of right and wrong is not to be injured.

As always, it is the poorest of all who suffer most as a result of this kind of conflict. Oil prices are rising. Those first to feel the effects are the developing countries which have no sources of energy. Years of hard work are being undone. Never before in its history has the United Nations taken such a united and determined stand against an aggressor. Never before has an aggressor had less chance of splitting an international community acting as one.

Time does not work for Saddam Hussein. Only the three routes charted by the Security Council will lead Iraq out of its self-imposed isolation: the complete and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait; the restoration of that country's full sovereignty; and the immediate release of all hostages. The refusal of the Iraqi leadership to meet these demands is a challenge to the whole community of nations. We give our unqualified support to the implementation of these resolutions of the United Nations. Aggression cannot be, must never be, rewarded.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

The determination and joint action of the Members of the United Nations can mark the beginning of a new peace-keeping role for the world Organization. All Members must recognize and live up to their responsibility. We desire peace for the nations of that region, and we desire the unity of the Arab world, which has been destroyed by Iraq's aggression.

The opportunities for developing a new world order lie in solidarity and joint action. They must be taken. The family of nations acted wisely when, after the terrible experience of two world wars, it placed the responsibility for safeguarding world peace in the hands of the United Nations. There is a good chance now - as there never was in the past - of the noble aims enshrined in the United Nations Charter being comprehensively achieved. The ending of the East-West conflict has helped make this possible. Ideological barriers are falling. The settlement of conflicts by military means is becoming increasingly outlawed. Rule of law is acquiring greater significance.

And thus attention focuses on the Organization whose task it is to resolve differences among nations by peaceful means. This is the historic hour of the United Nations. The peace-keeping potential of the Charter must be fully exhausted. The community of nations must throw its whole weight behind the Secretary-General's efforts to maintain world peace.

The termination of the East-West conflict will release considerable material, spiritual and political energies with which to overcome the global challenges confronting us: the elimination of famine, poverty and underdevelopment in the third world; the overcoming of the debt problem; and the protection of the natural sources of life.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

The United Nations can now, at long last, play its proper role in shaping an interdependent world, a world which must be governed by a sense of mutual responsibility rather than by power politics. We all know that the challenges facing mankind as a whole no longer leave any country free from responsibility. The one world in which we have been placed requires new, joint efforts on the part of East and West, North and South, new systems of co-operation and of securing peace, both global and regional. A single State, however great and powerful it may be, is in ever-increasing areas incapable of coping with those challenges alone. The one world calls for joint action, globally and regionally, on account of its vulnerability, which is assuming threatening proportions, but also on account of the many unused opportunities for its development. Interdependence and co-operation are the factors governing the new age we are entering. A new ethical standard is required for the one world. It must be a standard of shared responsibility for the world as a whole, for the common environment, and for our common posterity.

Thus a new community of mutual responsibility should emerge as the basis of a new world order - a global order embracing the diversity of nations, their cultures, traditions and religions; an order in which all retain their identity in mutual respect and in which all can live together, reconciled with each other. A global order of peace and co-operation, of freedom and human rights, demands, above all, social justice. True peace exists only where all human rights are respected.

The two United Nations Covenants protecting political as well as economic and social rights must be viewed together. Nowhere must they be simply empty postulations; their practical application to all is needed.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

A decent human existence also presupposes an unharmed environment. It presupposes the preservation of man's natural sources of life. The safeguarding of global peace demands not only the ending of man's war against man, but also the ending of economic exploitation. It also demands the ending of man's war against nature. There should be a third United Nations human rights covenant to protect the natural sources of life.

The task of the United Nations in this decade is to develop the international legal system further in order to ensure mankind's survival. Never before has it been more important to contemplate the consequences for posterity of the political, security, economic, technological and environmental decisions we take today. Never before has a generation's responsibility for the future been greater. But never before have there been such opportunities for new thinking and new action. We Germans intend to devote our talents, our experience and our economic resources to the common effort to accomplish this huge task.

The reorganization of industry in the new federal states which are about to become a part of our country and our assistance for the reforms being undertaken in Central and Eastern Europe confront us with huge problems. None the less, we shall make even greater efforts to meet our responsibility towards the third-world countries. Our contribution to their development through the transfer of know-how, technology and capital will increase, not decrease.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

Solidarity with Central and Eastern Europe does not imply that we are turning away from the third world. The group of countries capable of using and willing to use their material resources to create a better world will on the whole grow larger.

The economic reforms in Central and Eastern Europe, including the Soviet Union, will not only open up new opportunities for the countries concerned but third world nations, too, will derive benefit from the larger markets, from the more intensive international division of labour and from the more efficient use of scarce natural resources. In this way German and European unification will produce its peace dividend for all regions of the world.

New thinking and new action are possible only if all concerned recognize their own mistakes. Only then will North and South find solutions to the problems of the future. Only thus shall we all be able to meet our special responsibility in the quest for a global civilization capable of survival.

The development of a market- and ecologically-oriented civilization which is both pluralistic and yet collective and capable of coping with the problems of tomorrow is the real challenge at the end of this century. Economic freedom must not become self-destructive. Technological advancement has made it possible for us to give the world a more humane countenance. But if we fail we shall destroy the sources of life not only for ourselves but for future generations. A strategy for ensuring mankind's survival must assume the place in our thoughts and in our actions which has up to now been reserved for the preservation of national interests, often enough through power politics and the weight of our arms policy.

This above all else is the global conversion of thought and action which we must all achieve both as States and as individuals. We must together embark on solutions which will open up to a world population numbering over 6 billion at the end of this millennium a tangible common perspective for life in decent human

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conditions. A number of important conferences lie ahead. They must be used for this purpose.

The report submitted by the South Commission chaired by Julius Nyerere shows that a new language has been found, a language in which "own" mistakes too are admitted. This report shows that the third world is meeting its responsibility in the one world and for the one world. The industrial countries must respond to this signal. New thinking and new action is called for on both sides. The opportunities for a new beginning in the dialogue between North and South based on fairness and partnership and with each side prepared to learn from the other have never been better than at this moment.

The termination of the East-West confrontation has freed that dialogue from ideological ballast. This makes it easier to concentrate on the real problems of development. An open dialogue between North and South is the major political task of the present time. We must face up to this task and we must do so now.

The indebtedness of the developing countries and its paralysing effects on economic growth and development continue to increase. According to International Monetary Fund (IMF) estimates it will rise by 7 per cent to over $1.3 trillion by the end of 1991. Despite progress with the implementation of the extended debt strategy, no breakthrough has been achieved. On the contrary: in view of higher oil prices and interest rates, prospects for the debtor countries have clearly deteriorated. The international financial organizations must do even more to meet their responsibility for development in the third world.

The Uruguay Round must end successfully, especially for the sake of the developing countries. Their growing integration into the world economy must also be reflected in the shaping of general economic conditions. The greatest

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

development resource is the people in the developing countries themselves. These people must be given a hope, must be given prospects for the future, for themselves and for their children. The World Summit for Children this coming weekend will provide important stimulus.

The key problem in terms of global ecology is the rapid growth of the world population. Only by means of a global equalization of burdens in which national economic policies set new priorities in order to level off the extreme disparities in living conditions will it be possible to change general social, economic and cultural conditions in the third world to such an extent that large families will no longer need children as a means of supplementing the family income or as old-age insurance.

Family planning schemes alone will not have any lasting effect on birth rates. They must be complemented by measures to ensure basic economic and social security, gradually to rectify the unjust distribution of income and to improve educational opportunities in many countries.

No one can want the excessive consumption rates for commodities and energy to continue to increase in the industrial countries, or that this trend should be continued by over 6 billion people at the end of this decade. That would spell ecological disaster. All of us in the industrial countries must change our way of life. Governments can help by offering market incentives, by regulation and by redistributing tax burdens. The environment-friendly use of resources and the recycling of materials must be made worth while for companies, but not the squandering of energy and other resources.

Another key problem is the changing of the world climate through the greenhouse effect and the depletion of the ozone layer. Each of the Earth's many

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

environmental problems will be exacerbated if these two central problems are not solved. Air pollution, the extinction of species and erosion, will increase dramatically and reduce the chances of survival of future generations.

The Federal Republic of Germany, being a signatory of the Hague Declaration of the spring of 1989, regards the decisions taken at the Paris economic summit in July 1989 as the political basis for an international convention to protect the Earth's atmosphere. That convention should be signed as a framework agreement at the world Conference on Environment and Development to be held in Brazil in 1992. Supportive measures under the aegis of the United Nations are indispensable if changes in present energy policies are to reduce emissions of carbon dioxide and trace gases.

The good-example policy as regards environmental protection will be continued after the unification of the two German States. A policy for safeguarding the environment is also a policy for safeguarding world peace. Responsibility for protecting mankind's natural and cultural heritage is one of the classic responsibilities of the United Nations as it seeks to maintain world peace. This was impressively confirmed by the World Charter for Nature which the General Assembly adopted in October 1982.

We all have the choice of either definitively and irrevocably destroying the Earth within a few decades or adopting a responsible attitude and beginning to use nature's resources and energy sensibly on the basis of partnership and in a genuinely environment-friendly manner.

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

This means we must first soberly take stock of the situation, taking into account the consequences for the environment of aberrations ranging from energy wasting to the present climatically damaging exploitation of tropical rain forests, to name only two of the many global ecological problems. But it implies, above all, admitting our omissions, our carelessness, our thoughtlessness and our deliberate blindness to approaching disasters. Let us be serious about the principle of responsibility.

We all realize that we are confronted by global challenges that affect everyone's survival. The safeguarding of peace, economic development, social justice, disarmament and the protection of life's natural resources are those global challenges. The task of coping with them requires all our energies, ideas and efforts.

The division of my country and of Europe and the East-West confrontation have been a heavy burden on us all. Ideological confrontation, power politics and the striving for superiority over others forced us all into an arms race. They divided Europe and the world. All this has tied up considerable energy. That energy is now being released. We can use it together in meeting our global responsibility for a peace-keeping task on a scale unprecedented in the history of mankind, that is, for the one world.

On the eve of its unification Germany declares to the family of nations: We shall meet our responsibility in Europe and in the world; we shall meet our responsibility for Europe and for the world.

When on the night of 2-3 October 1990, we Germans unite, our mood will be one of gratitude and joy, of reflection and responsibility. It will unite us with the

(Mr. Genscher, Federal Republic of Germany)

hopes, wishes and objectives of the nations of Europe and of the world. The united Germany will render its contribution to peace and to freedom in Europe and throughout the whole world.

Mr. HURD (United Kingdom): May I start by congratulating you most warmly, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly and by paying tribute to your predecessor, Mr. Joseph Garba. We are already accustomed to the calm and authoritative way in which you conduct our discussions. I should like also to pay a very warm tribute to the Secretary-General. We have benefited greatly from his wisdom and energy during this last year, and, as he knows, we will rely on them perhaps even more enthusiastically in the time ahead.

What a contrast there is between the General Assembly today and that of a year ago. In 12 months we have seen the passing of an old and unmourned order. The end of last year, 1989, was a time of great excitement. We were lucky to witness that rare happening: a peaceful revolution. Usually, I suppose, in world affairs surprises are unwelcome. But last year's surprises were almost all good news. Less than a year ago, President Gorbachev told the Government of the German Democratic Republic that time would not forgive those who came too late. One month later the Berlin Wall was torn down.

Now, on 3 October, the German people will reunite in peace and democracy. We have just heard an eloquent analysis and commitment from the Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, Mr. Hans Dietrich Genscher, on that subject. I would simply add on behalf of the United Kingdom that on that day, 3 October, we shall share wholeheartedly the happiness of the German people. It will be a big day, of course, for Germany; a big day and a welcome day for Europe and for the rest of the world. As one of the four wartime allies, we are proud of our part in

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

helping forward that process. There was an immense amount to do when the 2 plus 4 process was first dreamt of in Ottawa in February, but we worked swiftly, thoroughly and as partners and the 2 plus 4 Agreement signed this month in Moscow was a first major achievement of the new world order.

Last autumn the Foreign Minister of Poland, Mr. Skubiszewski, who is here today, became the first representative of a democratic Government in Eastern Europe to address the General Assembly. That was an extraordinary change. Nobody then predicted that almost all the other countries in Eastern Europe would over so short a time begin by questioning and end by rejecting communism before this, the next session of the General Assembly.

The change of course has not been confined to Europe. In South Africa the State President, a white politician elected solely by a white minority, the leader of a party dedicated traditionally to apartheid, first released Mr. Nelson Mandela from prison and then sat down in friendly and determined negotiations with him. We must exert ourselves to help forward those two men and, more important, the peace process that they are now undertaking.

But we should not be mesmerized by these happy changes. We must now knuckle down to the mundane task of making these changes a part of everyday life, of our habits of thought and our instinctive sense of reality. We cannot yet be sure of the permanence or the full consequences of the "velvet" revolutions around the world. We need to remember that the great Chinese statesman Chou En-lai, when asked what he thought of the French Revolution, replied, "It is too soon to tell". I am not suggesting that we need 200 years for reflection, but I am sure we would be wise to proceed with caution and with caution, renewed determination.

Certainly there has been great enthusiasm and great achievement; that is beyond gainsaying. But it does not mean that the new order is safely or completely

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

in place or universally accepted. On the night of 2 August, President Saddam Hussein reminded us of reality.

By invading and annexing Kuwait, he brought instant soberness to a world that was perhaps in some danger of believing that the millennium had arrived 10 years ahead of time. Of course, the aggression against Kuwait was not the first act of unjustified violence with which the United Nations has had to deal. Of course there have been many acts of aggression and injustice since 1945, and some of them, we must remember, remain partly or wholly uncorrected. But there was something about the simple brutality of the attack on Kuwait that put it in a category by itself.

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

It was clear; it was complete. Every principle of international law was flouted. Only the most desultory attempt at an excuse was brought forward and then even that excuse was immediately abandoned. The Charter of the United Nations - our document - was held in complete contempt. It is for those reasons that an extraordinary and unique coalition of the international community has formed against the aggressor.

Iraq's aggression dominates our thoughts about the Middle East, but we must not lose sight of other issues in the region. We must not lose sight above all of the need for a just solution, at last, to the Palestinian problem. We have no intention of forgetting that piece of unfinished business. But any solution to that problem will have to rest on respect for international law and respect for engagements entered into. That is why before that problem can be solved we must deal with the case of Iraq and Iraq's aggression. The chances of a more secure world order depend directly on the success of the international coalition which I have mentioned in reversing the occupation of Kuwait. The test is formidable; there can be no doubt about that. But the test cannot be evaded. This is a defining moment. How we act now will define, will shape, the next decade.

So it seems to me that we can be enthusiastic about the real progress which has been made in the world, provided that we are sober about the tasks still to be accomplished. I would like to look very briefy at the system of international relations in which we must work. The basic unit in the system, the basic unit in this Hall, the basic unit in our Organization will continue to be the nation state - this nation-state system which emerged, I suppose, in its modern form in Europe in the nineteenth century; and in the twentieth century the colonial empires, first in Eastern Europe, then in Africa and Asia, were transformed into smaller nation states. It is not a perfect system; no one here would claim that.

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

But it has proved enduring and it has been supplemented by regional groupings. Where these groupings are successful they smooth the rough edges between nation states. They bring together by choice the efforts of Member States for a particular purpose, and I believe that that will endure.

I would like to focus for a minute or two as a European on the three principal groups of this kind in Europe: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the European Community, and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE).

NATO held a summit in July in London and that summit took two fundamental decisions. We decided that NATO should remain as a defensive alliance with an integrated command which provides a framework for the stationing of United States and other forces in Germany. I believe that history shouts for the need for the American presence in Europe. It was a mistake after the First World War that Americans went home - a mistake which we all regretted and repented. But the second decision of the NATO summit in July was to extend in a new way and with a new emphasis the hand of friendship and co-operation from NATO to the member countries of the Warsaw Pact, including of course the Soviet Union. As a result of the London summit, NATO will remain but NATO will change.

The second key body in Europe is the European Community. Since 1985 the European Community has developed a new dynamism. Future development should be both wider and deeper. It should be wider because I would expect that applications from a number of other European States for full membership will be accepted before the end of the century. As you know, Mr. President, two are already to hand. Some applications may be from members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA); some may come from the newly democratic States of Central and Eastern Europe as they complete their transformation to free-market economies. It seems to me

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

inconceivable that the Europe of Twelve which we have today could or would wish indefinitely to shut the door of membership against fully qualified European democracies which are anxious to join, whether they are now members of EFTA or whether they are in the centre or the south or the east of Europe.

We are also deepening the Community by completing the single internal market to dismantle barriers to trade in goods and services and to movement of people. We are preparing two intergovernmental conferences, both of which will begin under the Italian presidency at the end of this year. In one we shall seek to improve the working of our institutions; in the other we shall consider plans for economic and monetary union. The steady British argument, repeated in meeting after meeting, is for a liberal, open, evolutionary approach in all these discussions.

The third European structure is the CSCE. Here we are working to establish more firmly a common system of values, common standards for international behaviour among European States. That all sounds very high-minded. What does it mean in practice? I think it means some very specific things in practice. It means we need to underscore the protection of human rights. We need to guarantee the rule of law. We need to guarantee free elections. We need to work in general towards a common understanding of the fundamental freedom of individuals and the duties of government. Much of this was sketched out in the Helsinki Final Act 15 years ago. I remember that at the time some of us looked a little warily at the high-sounding promises of that Final Act in Helsinki. But there are many brave individuals in the world today who can testify from their own experience that out of those promises of 1975, out of those undertakings came effective pressure and eventual action to give them their liberty and their rights.

Now, a treaty on conventional armed forces in Europe (CFE) is a prerequisite - an indispensable prerequisite - for the CSCE summit, which we hope will be held in

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

Paris in November, and for the CFE treaty hard, urgent work now lies ahead for those of us who are concerned. If we succeed in negotiating that CFE treaty in Vienna, we will have brought about a rough military balance on the European continent; we will have removed the ability of all signatories to launch a surprise attack or to start large-scale offensive action. For the first time, the main instruments of physical force will be subject to detailed international law. Arms control and arms reduction, which have been a distant aspiration - the subject of many speeches over 40 years in this Hall - are now becoming a reality in Europe. Once the CFE treaty is signed, the summit in Paris can consider, and will consider, further ideas, including our own - about a new centre for reducing risks, about building confidence, about preventing conflict in Europe.

Of course neither a centre nor a treaty will make conflict impossible. But I believe that every move we can make towards greater openness and honesty between nations makes it harder to envisage the kind of misunderstanding that could lead again to conflict in Europe. CFE, therefore, will be the stable footing on which the new European security structures can rest.

Perhaps these structures are particularly important to Eastern Europe. Communism did not solve the old disputes in that part of our continent, but it put them to sleep. Now the imposed communist rule is disappearing and with it the anaesthetic which communist rule applied. We can hear again the murmur of some of those ancient disputes.

Of course in Western Europe we also used to have such disputes. French and Germans have fought each other three times in the last 120 years. Many of us were drawn in. No one would suppose that conceivable now. It is not that the nation states have disappeared; it is rather that new structures, like the European Community, are in place; it is rather that by statesmanship the poison of old disputes has been drained away. The friendship of France and Germany - of which

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

Hans-Dietrich Genscher reminded us a few minutes ago - is an accomplished and welcome fact. Conflict over who should possess Alsace-Lorraine, for example, is now impossible. We need to create that same certainty that conflict is impossible as regards all the other disputes which still persist to some extent in Europe.

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

And not just in Europe. This is not just a European ambition. Once the Iraqis have been withdrawn from Kuwait, we will need to consider how lasting peace can be brought to the Middle East. And perhaps it is not too early to start thinking about how that long-term security can be achieved. Mr. Gianni De Michelis, speaking of behalf of the members of the European Community, put forward some thoughts on that subject, which I should like to echo. There is a need for a new and serious attempt to resolve the complex of Middle East disputes, including, as I have already mentioned, Palestine. There will also need to be a new security structure. This is 1990. It will be for the States in the region to decide how this should be done. It will be for them to take the initiative. No one will attempt to impose a system on them. But I believe the slow but steady progress of the process of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) may be useful to them. The CSCE process allows political dialogue and has established common principles ranging from respect for borders to human rights. There is transparancy through confidence- and security-building measures. All of this gradually coming together in Europe has meant, and will mean I hope in the future, that States can increasingly trust each other and feel secure.

This search for security is world wide. The United Nations was formed to create and maintain such stability. Although the Charter of the United Nations was signed in San Francisco 45 years ago, the security mechanisms did not have the chance to work as intended. They were almost immediately frozen by the chill of the cold war. But just as the security mechanisms of the United Nations were early casualties of the cold war, so they have already proved to be one of the first beneficiaries of the thaw. After many years in which political divisions among the permanent members weakened the force of Security Council resolutions, the new unity of purpose which we see, and which we saw again yesterday, has given the Council

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

unprecedented vigour. I worked here for four years as a junior member of my country's delegation in the 1950s and spent many hours in this Hall, some of them weary hours, some of them hours which, at the time, I must confess I thought were fairly pointless. I never expected to see such a healthy change in this building as a result of the developments of the last year.

And I am not thinking only of the Security Council resolutions over Kuwait, although for the reasons I have given, they are crucial. There are other examples. In Namibia, which under the auspices of the United Nations was able last year to achieve peaceful independence and free elections. In Cambodia, the five permanent members have co-operated closely. Discussions were tough at times. They will be on such occasions, but agreement was reached at the end of August on a framework for a comprehensive political settlement. And on 9 and 10 September the Cambodian parties themselves endorsed this framework. I am well aware that a great deal of hard work and argument remain on the Cambodian question, but there is now a hope, a flickering hope, where once despair seemed total. The Secretary-General's mission of good offices in Cyprus continues, and it continues with our full support. It seems to us vital that all the parties should help him to reach a final settlement for that island.

The United Nations must tackle the massive human problems which nation States and even regional groups cannot handle effectively by themselves. There is the menace of drugs, where the situation goes up and down, but on balance I believe continues to deteriorate. The work of the United Nations drugs units has been increasing to meet those demands, but more resources are required. Reform of the United Nations drug abuse control structure is essential. We believe the three existing drugs units should be unified into one streamlined structure under one senior full-time head, and I hope that at this session the General Assembly will be able to take a decision along those lines.

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

Then there are the hugely varied problems of our environment, the ozone layer, global warming, and many others. These are problems which have to be tackled, and quickly. But they can be tackled only if the world community acts together, and undoubtedly the United Nations and its agencies offer the best way of pooling these efforts. We make, and will continue to make, a serious contribution. It was yesterday in London that my Government published a White Paper outlining environmental policies for the 1990s, including the pledge to peg CO_2 emissions by 2005 at 1990 levels.

We must not forget, because of these relatively new problems, the battle against poverty. Britain has announced in the last week important new proposals on debt relief for the poorest countries, building on the earlier British initiative which led to the agreement of the "Toronto terms" in 1988. We have proposed that the Paris Club should improve its existing concessions by cancelling two thirds of a country's entire bilateral official debt. Repayment of the remainder would be tailored to match each country's improving debt service capacity over 25 years. To provide additional breathing space, there would be no payments during the first five years of this period. The conditions for qualifying for this relief would remain broadly the same as for the Toronto scheme.

But it seems to me that, when all these other problems are considered and our energies devoted to them, it remains true that war is still the chief scourge of mankind, and following in the wake of war, the tragedies of famine and of refugees. Because that is so, peace-making and peace-keeping will stay at the heart of worthwhile international activity. They are the core of our work here. I hope that the United Nations benefits will be extended to all the people in the world who seek membership, and here I am thinking in particular of the people of Korea.

(Mr. Hurd, United Kingdom)

I have tried briefly to sketch some of our own approaches and attitudes to these tasks in Britain. We try to bring practical realism to the tasks which I have outlined this morning. We know that past achievement does not guarantee future progress. It is far too soon to sit back and relax to the sound of our own self-congratulation. There is a huge amount to be done, and all of it is complicated, and much of it is daunting. But I am more hopeful than before that the international community, through the United Nations, is equal to the tasks. First, as I have said and for the reasons I have given, the new order must succeed in getting Iraq out of Kuwait, otherwise it will be stillborn and no one will take it seriously. But once that is done - and that will happen - I believe the new order, in its different shapes and different guises, will grow. I believe it will flourish, and I believe it will consolidate, so that the last decade of this century, the decade which we are now entering, may well turn out to be the safest and the most successful.

ADDRESS BY MR. ANIBAL CAVACO SILVA, PRIME MINISTER OF THE PORTUGUESE REPUBLIC

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear an address by the Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic.

Mr. Anibal Cavaco Silva, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, Mr. Anibal Cavaco Silva, and invite him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. CAVACO SILVA (Portugal) (spoke in Portugese; English text furnished by the delegation): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly, and to express Portugal's confidence in your high personal skills, which will help guarantee the positive results expected of this session.

I would also like to convey my country's appreciation for the effective manner in which Mr. Joseph Garba discharged the important functions of President of the General Assembly at its forty-fourth session.

With the notably greater role played by the United Nations on the international scene, particular mention is also certainly due to the Secretary-General, Mr. Perez de Cuellar, for all he has done to bolster continued and successful efforts for world peace and development.

In the past year, profound world-wide changes have taken place. I especially welcome the delegation of Namibia, whose presence in this General Assembly attests to the fundamental role played by the United Nations in the process which led to that country's independence.

I also welcome Liechtenstein as a new Member of the United Nations, whose contribution to international co-operation is highly appreciated.

We are witnessing a far-reaching unfolding of events in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and an acceleration in the pace of history, which is leading to the unification of Germany and making the observance of the principles of democracy and the respect for human rights a living reality throughout the European continent.

Today, the end of the cold war, the consequent détente in East-West relations, disarmament and the new formulas to achieve co-operation - all these are decisive factors of strategic importance.

(Mr. Cavaco Silva, Portugal)

An emerging multipolar world, however, entails the risk of proliferation of regional conflict. And just recently, the principles that ought to govern the freedom of the peoples and the sovereignty of the Member States, such as international law and the Charter of the United Nations itself, were brutally violated when Iraq, in an irresponsible act, occupied Kuwait.

The response of the international community was an exemplary one, as demonstrated by the unanimous decision of the Security Council, which immediately condemned the invasion and annexation, and subsequently imposed an embargo. Peace and security must rely on full compliance, on the part of all nations, with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and it is urgent to enforce strict observance of law and legitimacy and to restore full sovereignty to Kuwait.

Portugal, both at the national level and within the framework of a co-ordinated effort in the European Community, the Western European Union and the United Nations, will continue to support all endeavours aiming at the total withdrawal of Iraqi military forces from its occupied neighbour.

We also think that the United Nations resolutions must be fully complied with and, if necessary, that further measures should be taken by the Security Council. We favour a peaceful solution to the conflict, which can only be possible with an attitude of determination and the respect of principles on the part of the whole international community.

It is my conviction that the crisis that has broken out in the Gulf with the military occupation of Kuwait will not affect the climate of world-wide understanding and dialogue that is being established throughout the world, as demonstrated recently at the Helsinki summit meeting, by the positive changes occurring in Central and Eastern Europe, the developments in southern Africa and the real progress made in the field of disarmament.

(Mr. Cavaco Silva, Portugal)

Portugal has tried to contribute to this new climate, in the European and world contexts. Changes in the East European countries and consequent acceptance of the fundamental values of democracy and rule of law made it possible for the Government of Portugal to host, last March in Lisbon, within the framework of the Council of Europe, the first meeting of all the foreign ministers of Europe. I trust that the spirit of dialogue which prevailed will be strengthened.

Moreover, Portugal is participating fully in the political co-operation within the Twelve, thus reinforcing its capacity to take part in world affairs.

Likewise, we are committed to contributing to European integration in the political, economic, financial and social fields. The reinforcement of the Community's mechanisms of intervention will contribute to a gradual strengthening of a European identity and will translate into a renewed factor of security and stability, not only for the European continent, but also for the world as a whole.

I would stress, in this context, the forthcoming unification of Germany, a process that reflects not only the current positive evolution in the political and military situation in Central and Eastern Europe, but also the persevering will of the German people and the strong commitment of all Western allies to the task of safeguarding the values of freedom and human rights.

All these changes have led to the development of novel strategies for the Atlantic Alliance, which remains a factor of importance to Western cohesion.

On the European continent, other factors are indicating a renewed confidence and hope in the future, as in the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE). The 35 States participating in CSCE were able to create the conditions for new schemes of co-operation, straightforward relations and freedom of movement that will prove of great benefit to the individual. To that end, the maintenance of ties with the United States and Canada are indispensable to the building up of security in the future Europe.

(Mr. Cavaco Silva, Portugal)

A most promising outcome of the new climate in East-West relations is the progress made in the current negotiations at different levels for a substantial and balanced reduction in armaments between the two super-Powers and among military alliances in Europe. Portugal supports the efforts towards a reduction of United States and Soviet strategic nuclear weapons, as well as the negotiations that are taking place in Vienna with a view to reducing conventional forces in the countries members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Warsaw Pact. The outcome of these talks will be an important factor for stability and confidence in Europe. My country deems equally very important every endeavour for a total ban on the manufacture and possession of chemical weapons, and we call for strict compliance with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and for speedy accession to it by those countries which are not yet signatories.

I believe that a new world outlook, made possible by the rapid evolution of history and by détente, requires that efforts for establishing a basis of confidence and stability include greater co-operation in multiple domains, the kind of co-operation that has as its main goal the peaceful development and progress of mankind.

Portugal is definitely committed to the building of a new Europe but, for historical reasons, it maintains close relations with other peoples and continents.

Before the end of this century, we will celebrate 500 years of the Portugese discoveries in Africa, the Americas and Asia, which are the symbol par excellence of the encounter of different cultures and civilizations. By bringing various peoples together, introducing the most varied cultural expressions to one another and establishing the principles of international sea trade, we made a decisive contribution to redrawing the map of the world.

(Mr. Cavaco Silva, Portugal)

We have today special ties with Portuguese-speaking countries and communities around the world. These preferential relations, with Brazil and with African countries that have Portuguese as their official language, are historical factors, but they are, above all, elements of political, economic and cultural interaction, mutually beneficial, which contribute to international stability. The group formed by the five Portuguese-speaking African countries is today a reality and one more intervening factor in Africa to be reckoned with, when the destiny of the continent is being shaped; furthermore, these countries now assume decisive positions in the process of political democracy, economic liberalization and respect for human rights and liberties in Africa.

I should like to make a special reference, as an expression of hope, to the ongoing process of negotiations in which the peoples of Angola and Mozambique are at present involved, in the search for peaceful solutions, political stability and economic and social progress, that can, I am sure, put an end to the war and to their suffering.

My Government is committed to the success of the negotiations that are taking place between the parties in the conflicts, because only peace can help the peoples of Angola and Mozambique fully to express themselves. In particular, I am convinced that, if all the parties display realism and flexibility, it will be possible to arrive soon at peaceful solutions.

We are also following with interest the political and social developments in the Republic of South Africa, which is home to a significant Portuguese community. My Government supports the efforts by President De Klerk, Nelson Mandela and other South African leaders towards the attainment, through dialogue, of constitutional solutions guaranteeing respect for the fundamental rights and liberties of all South Africans. Only dialogue will bring about the abolition of apartheid, the

(Mr. Cavaco Silva, Portugal)

democratization of South African society and the access of all to the benefits of progress.

The recent independence of Namibia constitutes a historical fact which can foster a much-desired stability in southern Africa.

Within the framework of its foreign policy, Portugal gives special importance to co-operation for development, including preferential relations with countries and peoples with which it has historic and cultural links. The enhancement of this co-operation has been possible because it rests on respect for the sovereignty of other States and on the excellent, straightforward political relationship it enjoys with the established Governments of Portuguese-speaking nations.

The international community has an ethical obligation of solidarity with those countries which are experiencing difficult economic situations, and it should try to find appropriate solutions. I should like to affirm the support of my country, within its means, for all multilateral initiatives that will help ameliorate such situations, especially in the case of the least developed countries.

The problem of the foreign debt should be the focus of particular attention, as it constitutes a major obstacle to economic development and to the improvement of peoples' standards of living. The solution can be found only in new and imaginative initiatives that are not harmful to economic growth, and this requires the concerted efforts of the international community, so that urgent steps can be taken to resolve this serious situation.

An essentially Atlantic nation, Portugal is naturally endowed for the dialogue with other continents, and it has important communities in Europe, in Africa, in Brazil and in numerous other Latin American countries, as well as in Asia and Australia. These Portuguese communities are an important factor in the strengthening of our relations with other countries. I should like to single out Brazil, since the Portuguese settlers and their descendants in that country share

(Mr. Cavaco Silva, Portugal)

with us a common language and a centuries-old history making our relations especially fraternal. The vitality of the Portuguese community and the geographic and economic relevance of Brazil and the ties that bind us to that nation explain the uniqueness of our relationship.

Portugal acknowledges that dialogue and close communication with the People's Republic of China are essential to the stability and progress of Macao and its population. Macao, a link between the Portuguese and China, is an example of long-term peaceful relations, which, I am sure, will remain intact after the transfer of the administration of the territory by the end of 1999.

The international community is the main beneficiary of the current trend, thanks to which the United Nations has actually been able to start carrying out the tasks and fulfilling the hopes expressed more than four decades ago by its founders. As we approach the end of this century, however, there are still matters that require urgent and concerted action.

I am referring, in the first instance, to the Arab-Israeli conflict, to which a solution can be found only through an unequivocal recognition of the rights of the Palestinian people, along with indispensable assurances of security for all the States in the region.

Latin America has experienced serious problems regarding stability and violation of human rights, in addition to economic shortcomings. There are, however, signs of the strengthening of democratic institutions and a greater awareness of the importance of the process of regional integration, which deserve the active support of the international community.

My Government also lends its support to the United Nations efforts towards finding peaceful solutions for the present conflicts in Western Sahara and Cambodia.

The existence of a climate more conducive to resolving conflicts that have dragged on for years provides an opportunity of which the international community

(Mr. Cavaco Silva, Portugal)

should take advantage to its fullest. As an example, the dialogue in which the two Koreas are currently engaged, as well as their eventual membership in the United Nations, constitutes a major stabilizing factor for that region of the world.

The fundamental rights and freedoms of the peoples must not be handled in a selective or discretionary way. The use of double standards in the application of essential principles can lead to inconsistent action and to tolerance of potential violators and constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The international community cannot endorse conquest by force or territorial gains won by blatant military invasion with the intent of imposing a policy of fait accompli.

In the case of the invasion and occupation of East Timor, non-compliance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, combined with accommodation to a de facto situation, has set a grave international precedent - unfortunately, a precedent given further credence by the invasion and annexation of Kuwait.

Portugal has systematically called the attention of the international community to the need for respect for the rights of the East Timorese people, as well as for their cultural and religious identity. We act in accordance with the responsibility incumbent upon us, recognized by the United Nations, in conformity with its Charter and pertinent principles and resolutions. It is for my country a moral, historic and constitutional imperative - based on the unanimous consensus of all our political parties - to defend, by all legitimate means, the rights of the people of East Timor, particularly the right to self-determination and to its identity as a people.

(Mr. Cavaco Silva, Portugal)

One cannot expect Portugal to refrain from strongly denouncing the systematic violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms of the Timorese, which continue to occur, according to reports from unbiased and reliable sources.

Portugal has been completely open to dialogue and to the search for a negotiated solution with all the parties directly involved, in accordance with resolution 37/30. We have co-operated closely with the Secretary-General in his mediation efforts to achieve that goal. I should like to reiterate, unequivocally, our willingness to pursue that co-operation, in order to achieve an internationally acceptable, just and comprehensive solution. Only this could bring real peace to the martyred people of East Timor and allow them to voice their concerns; otherwise their legitimate rights are not respected.

The efforts of the Organization must be felt in various domains, with particular relevance for human rights. Everything should be done to achieve general compliance and observance of the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The growing interdependence among nations and continents has taken on an important dimension and significance, particularly with regard to the protection of the environment. Problems in this area are frequently global.and, therefore, it is urgent that all participants take responsibility for a joint solution.

The drug problem is another world scourge to which no country is immune at the present time. An effective weapon against drug trafficking on an international scale is therefore a priority, and only appropriate international co-operation can successfuly carry out this struggle in defence of human dignity.

The growing number of refugees resulting from the various conflicts or natural disasters presents another challenge that requires co-ordinated and effective joint efforts by the international community as a whole.

(Mr. Cavaco Silva, Portugal)

Relaxing East-West tensions should not make us forget that there are serious structural imbalances between the various countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It should be the task of the international economic bodies and the richer countries to adopt measures and programmes to help effect the transition to a multiparty democracy and a market economy in the countries that abandoned authoritarian systems of planned economy of their own free will.

We have followed and supported the political and economic reforms under way in the Soviet Union, which are a testimony to President Gorbachev's realism and an important contribution to the new world climate.

Portugal has alerted its partners to the importance of proper and sympathetic handling of North-South relations, since the contrasts at the level of economic growth and welfare and political stability are notoriously deep-seated and tend to increase in an alarming way, generating regional conflicts or serious political and social destabilization.

The initiative that I proposed within the framework of the Council of Europe for the creation, in Lisbon, of a centre for global interdependence and solidarity has begun to take shape. I consider it to be indispensable for us to arrive at a genuine contract of solidarity between the countries of the North and the South to attain a harmonious and comprehensive development of all the regions of the world, without which there can be no true stability and security.

Today there are 180 million people that speak Portuguese. They live in seven countries on three continents, and in numerous communities all over the world. The universalism and tolerance that characterize our history and our culture are at the basis of Portuguese foreign policy and explain our vocation for establishing ties with other peoples.

I should like to conclude with a word of praise for the United Nations and its successful pursuit of the most noble aspirations of mankind.

(Mr. Cavaco Silva, Portugal)

Today, the pace and dynamics of history do not allow solutions that might jeopardize peace, security and development. I therefore believe that the United Nations initiatives should be reinforced, since it is only within the framework of this Organization that we can find the universal formulas that are needed to create a more secure, stable and prosperous world - the world that we all share.

The PRESIDENT: On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic for the statement he has just made.

Mr. Cavaco Silva, Prime Minister of the Portuguese Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

ADDRESS BY MR. VIACHESLAV F. KEBICH, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS OF THE BYELORUSSIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC

The PRESIDENT: The Assembly will now hear a statement by the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Mr. Viacheslav F. Kebich.

Mr. Viacheslav F. Kebich, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, was escorted to the rostrum.

The PRESIDENT: I have great pleasure in welcoming the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, Mr. Viacheslav F. Kebich, and invite him to address the General Assembly.

Mr. KEBICH (Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic) (interpretation from Russian): Mr. President, I should like to offer my sincere congratulations to you, a representative of neutral and non-aligned Malta, which is making active use of its standing in the world to promote peace and international co-operation, on your election to the important post of President of the General Assembly at its current session, which will mark the forty-fifth anniversary of the United Nations.

(Mr. Kebich, Byelorussian SSR)

We are very glad to see in the United Nations family Namibia and Liechtenstein, which have joined the United Nations during this memorable year for the Organization.

First of all, I should like to express my deep respect for the United Nations, which has done so much to strengthen confidence and understanding among peoples. By its many activities and initiatives, the United Nations has convincingly proved how indispensable it is to the world community of States.

I feel obliged to emphasize that, under the influence of objective processes, our complicated and diverse world is becoming ever more interrelated and interdependent, and it is in ever greater need of a mechanism capable of constructively looking into its common problems and searching for mutually acceptable solutions. The role of this mechanism was assigned to the United Nations from its very inception, but only now, when there have been truly great changes in world events, when the idea of the supremacy of the interests of all mankind over all other interests is being more and more widely accepted, can the United Nations carry out fully and with the necessary effectiveness its mission as the greater unifier of the world's peoples.

(Mr. Kebich, Byelorussian SSR)

It can be said without exaggeration that in recent years a rebirth of the United Nations has begun, and it is gratifying that this process is continuing to gain momentum. I am firmly convinced that this unique Organization can see opening before it abundant new possibilities for a successful harmonization of the interests of individual States and those of the community of nations as a whole. The time has surely come for the United Nations to become in fact the collective intelligence of all mankind. All of us are greatly in need of this. A pressing need for international support is certainly being felt by our Republic, which has started on the path of a fundamental reordering of all its social, political and economic structures. That path will undoubtedly lead it to the highway of genuine democracy.

In July of this year the Parliament of Byelorussia, which had been formed as a result of free democratic elections, adopted the Declaration of State Sovereignty. As a result of that extraordinarily important document, our people is becoming the true master in its own house and is opening great possibilities for full participation by Byelorussia in the activities of the international community, whether in the political, economic, cultural or other areas of co-operation. The Declaration states "The Byelorussian SSR has set itself the goals of making its territory a nuclear-free zone, and the Republic a neutral State." We understand that it will not be easy to attain these goals. Many factors are involved here, and we shall need considered, realistic and stage-by-stage measures.

I should like to inform members that one of the first steps in this direction has already been taken. A month ago the Byelorussian SSR took part for the first time, as an observer, in the Conference of States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

Of course, for such a State as Byelorussia the question of neutrality is no less complex, and perhaps even more so. That is why the Republic is vitally

(Mr. Kebich, Byelorussian SSR)

interested in the success of international efforts at all levels which can ensure the creation of the conditions necessary for it to acquire the status of a nuclear-free zone and a neutral State. From this rostrum, I wish to declare that we are ready to take an active part in this process in order to create a safe future for our own people and for other peoples. That is the reason why our Republic intends to watch closely the development of processes on the European continent. Byelorussia is situated at the crossroads of Europe. Therefore from time immemorial it has been doomed to be an area of military activities in most major conflicts.

There is no need to remind members of the plight of our people during the Second World War, suffering all the horrors of enemy invasion. Deadly flames burnt out our soil and left their tragic mark on literally every family. That is why for Byelorussia the idea of an "all-European house" is a guarantee for the safe future of its peace-loving people, which has suffered so much.*

We intend to take an active part in building that house and in creating common economic, ecological, cultural, legal and informational spheres on the continent. The signing in Moscow on 12 September of the Treaty on the Final Settlement with respect to Germany concludes, in my opinion, one of the most important primary stages of construction and creates favourable conditions for further efforts.

Byelorussia is particularly interested in the creation of nuclear-weapon-free zones in various parts of Europe, in rapid progress towards a continent completely free from such armaments and, naturally, in the establishment of nuclear-free zones in other regions of the world.

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* Mr. Rezek (Brazil), Vice-President, took the Chair.

(Mr. Kebich, Byelorussian SSR)

We believe that the most important way to reduce military confrontation is through the firm establishment of the ideas of purely defensive military doctrines and armed-forces structures and through the widespread practical application of the principle of reasonable sufficiency of defence.

In our view, military factors in security should increasingly be replaced by non-military ones. The creation of all-European political structures, the transition to a new Europe and from mutual understanding to interaction, mutually beneficial trade, joint efforts in various spheres for the benefit of peoples, including co-operation in preserving their national identity - all of these constitute the basis which will make the all-European house safe and stable. That way is the way of the future.

I must emphasize that this is the path that Byelorussia is going to take. We are ready to develop constructive co-operation with representatives of all countries and systems. We should like to establish particularly close contacts with our neighbours in Europe, including the countries of Central Europe - in other words, that region to our west with which Byelorussia has had historical ties.

Endeavouring to ensure security and prosperity for its people, our Republic is no less interested than other States in preventing a global nuclear conflict or any other armed conflict. Such conflicts, aside from being destructive of the foundations of security and ruinous for the participants, place an additional burden on those States which bear the financial costs of peace-keeping operations. Of course, those expenditures are necessary. However, they constitute a very heavy burden for various States, including ours. It is surely time to formulate this question in a different way: those States which are guilty of illegal actions should reimburse to the world community the cost of restoring the peace.

(Mr. Kebich, Byelorussian SSR)

In Byelorussia, as probably throughout the world, the events in the Middle East are a cause of extreme concern. In my opinion, the unprecedented solidarity shown by members of the Security Council during this crisis is an encouraging sign for a safe future in this region and everywhere on our planet. It is quite clear that this requires careful attention on the part of all countries of the world community.

The Byelorussian SSR supports the Security Council resolutions aimed at a peaceful settlement of the crisis in the Persian Gulf region. We believe that the United Nations has the right to expect the Government of Iraq to comply with the Security Council's demands, the most important of which is the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Iraqi troops from the State of Kuwait in order to restore that State's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity.

I should like to point out that in recent years Byelorussia has done much to consolidate the efforts of States aimed at preventing the creation of new weapons of mass destruction. We intend to continue our active work in this important area, and we are convinced that avoiding the danger of introducing new military technologies, especially in the field of weapons of mass destruction, is more reasonable than painful efforts to eliminate new weapons from military arsenals.

(Mr. Kebich, Byelorussian SSR)

How dangerous even the peaceful uses of nuclear technologies are is something that we unfortunately have learned by our own bitter experience. Four years ago Byelorussia fell victim to the consequences of a horrible disaster - one that did not take place in our territory.

The accident at the nuclear power plant in the small town of Chernobyl became a great calamity shared by the Byelorussian people as well as the Ukrainian and Russian peoples, a tragedy of truly planetary proportions. The malfunctioning of one single nuclear reactor contaminated enormous areas and endangered the health of the population in many countries. But the heaviest burden is that borne by the people of Byelorussia. Seventy per cent of the radioactive fall-out appeared in the territory of the Republic. Not just a narrow strip of land adjacent to the reactor, as was thought initially, but the entire - and I emphasize this - the entire territory of the Republic has become a zone of national ecological disaster.

Today Chernobyl is beating in our hearts. It beats with the radioactive discharges in Geiger counters in our fields and in the streets of our cities and towns. It is in the deceptive tranquil beauty of those forests and rivers that no one may enter. One must see the despair of a peasant unable to cultivate the land on which his ancestors had grown crops for centuries, the grief and helplessness of a mother who sees her children dying before her eyes, the silent sorrow of old people forced to leave forever the beloved villages and towns where they had spent their entire lives and where their families are buried.

Our Republic suffered and is continuing to suffer enormous damage. More than 2.2 million people, that is every fifth resident of the Republic, 18 per cent of the most productive farmland and 20 per cent of all forests are in the zone of long-term radiation. The external and internal radiation doses absorbed by Byelorussia's population at the time of the accident from short-lived radionuclides and still being absorbed from long-lived radionuclides are the highest known in

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practice anywhere in the world. According to the most conservative estimates, the direct economic loss alone amounts to about 10 annual budgets. Restoration will require more than financial resources. There is a need, an immediate and pressing need, for equipment, modern medicines, state-of-the-art know-how and technology. There is even a need for food because we have been forced to stop agricultural production on a large part of our territory. Unfortunately, the true scale of the tragedy did not become clear to us immediately, since it was the first time in world history that such an event had occurred. Now it is evident that the grave consequences, which will be felt for centuries, and the extent of the radioactive contamination make Chernobyl, without exaggeration, the greatest disaster in the history of mankind.

The Chernobyl tragedy has spread far beyond our frontiers. There is an inescapable spread of radionuclides. We must stop it. We must acquire experience for mankind on how to cope with the consequences of such a disaster. That is why I appeal in my grief, on behalf of our people, to the entire world community. Today our borders are open to receive help, and we hope that a growing awareness of the scale of the disaster will step up this help. We must eliminate the threat to the health of people in dozens of countries.

Our people has always borne its burdens on its own shoulders. We are doing everything in our power to eliminate the consequences of the disaster. However, I wish to stress once again that its dimensions are so vast that without concerted international efforts the task will be impossible. From this lofty rostrum I should like to express the deep gratitude of the Parliament and Government of Byelorussia to all States, all organizations and all people of good will who, responding to our appeal, have extended a helping hand at this painful time for our people. We thank them all most sincerely for their great and noble actions.

(Mr. Kebich, Byelorussian SSR)

Our special gratitude goes to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, for his efforts and to all members of the Economic and Social Council for the unanimous adoption of the resolution on co-operation to eliminate the consequences of the Chernobyl disaster.

In this hall, whose walls have heard descriptions of the grief and the tears of millions of people who have fallen victim to various disasters, I make an appeal, on behalf of the Government of Byelorussia, for the solidarity of peoples and States at a time of unprecedented disaster, that of radioactive contamination with direct global consequences. Any support, any offer of help will be welcomed with gratitude. Byelorussians as a people are facing Hamlet's dilemma not in a merely philosophical but in a horrifyingly literal sense.

The Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Byelorussian SSR states:

> "The Byelorussian SSR shall use its freedom and sovereignty first and foremost to save the people of the Byelorussian SSR from the effects of the Chernobyl disaster."

We believe that the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session will take major measures. In our opinion, it is necessary to adopt a special resolution reflecting an understanding of the planetary scale of this disaster and spelling out specific measures to co-ordinate the activities of the United Nations specialized agencies aimed at overcoming the global and local consequences of the disaster.

We would also consider it justified to transfer Byelorussia, for the period of recovery, from the category of donor country to that of receiving country in respect of United Nations technical assistance. We hope that this proposal will be met with understanding and support by States Members of the United Nations and the members of other international organizations.

(Mr. Kebich, Byelorussian SSR)

We have no intention of becoming totally immersed in our own problems and will continue to be open to the problems and sorrows of the entire planet. For example, the Byelorussian SSR, together with the world community, is now involved in setting up effective international co-operation for environmental protection, for the acceleration of the economic and social development of developing countries and for the observance of human rights and freedoms. We support the idea of convening in 1992 a United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

In order to ensure decent living conditions for our people and to survive in this difficult, even critical, situation, we must change over to a democratic State structure that emancipates the thought, initiative and energy of people and focuses on the individual and on his rights and interests.

We also need a much more efficient economy. In search of a more socially oriented and efficient economic way of life, we are moving towards a market economy. Such a rapid transition from one economic model to another is a difficult matter. Now we are engaged in a careful study of world experience. Naturally, we are interested in the models that have produced good results within relatively short periods of time.

(Mr. Kebich, Byelorussian SSR)

However, there is a problem in applying useful world-wide experience to our circumstances and adapting our circumstances to that experience. Therefore we are keenly interested in expert opinion, consultative services, effective joint ventures, capital investments and the creation of export potential. For these purposes, my Government is ready to work with foreign partners in bold and innovative ways.

We are prepared to trade in industrial and agricultural products and to engage in more complex forms of economic co-operation. And I am sure that you, as plenipotentiary representatives of your States, will convey to your Governments our readiness for the closest and most diversified kind of co-operation. In turn, I wish to assure you that we will spare no efforts to make such co-operation mutually beneficial and fruitful.

The people of Byelorussia, which underwent many ordeals and enormous suffering during the Second World War and whose vitality has once again been sorely tested by the Chernobyl disaster, wants good relations with all. It wants peace, stability and prosperity.

It is the duty of us all, the duty of the world community, to justify the aspirations and hopes of our peoples, to ensure that the end of the second millennium is recorded in history as a time of seized, not missed, opportunities.

I wish the President and the Secretary-General success in their difficult but noble work.

The PRESIDENT (interpretation from French): On behalf of the General Assembly, I wish to thank the President of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic for the important statement he has just made.

Mr. Viacheslav F. Kebich, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic, was escorted from the rostrum.

Mr. KASIM (Jordan) (interpretation from Arabic): It is a source of pleasure to see you, Sir, presiding over the General Assembly at its current session. Your election to this high office, which you so rightly deserve, reflects the great esteem in which your friendly country and you personally are held. It is also an indication of confidence in your ability to conduct the business of this session with the efficiency and wisdom that will ensure its success.

I am also delighted to express our gratitude and appreciation to your predecessor, Mr. Joseph Garba, on his outstanding efficiency and ability in conducting the business of the forty-fourth session of the General Assembly.

I would also pay tribute to the Secretary-General, Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, on his efforts and unceasing endeavours in the service of the cause of peace. In this respect, I would mention his valuable report on the work of the Organization, which last year, under his leadership, achieved important accomplishments in many regions and on various levels. We look forward to continued co-operation with the Secretary-General and to offering all that we can to enhance his ability to carry out his noble tasks.

Over the past few decades, my country continued to face regional circumstances of extreme complexity that were on the whole the result of the international situation that emerged after the First World War. While those circumstances have placed heavy burdens on us, a small country, they did not prevent the establishment of the philosophy of government in Jordan on solid foundations that are compatible with our national, religious and cultural heritage, our openness towards the rest of humanity and our interaction with it in a world whose continuity and progress can be guaranteed only by international legitimacy.

In 1945, together with six other Arab States, Jordan established the League of Arab States, which was the first regional organization to precede the establishment of the United Nations, to whose lofty principles we have always adhered. Jordan

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has acted with the utmost moderation and realism when dealing with the various crises, issues and currents witnessed by our region. This is in keeping with the nature of Jordan's makeup as a nation that upholds the supremacy of law and democratic participation. Despite the regional turbulence all round it, Jordan has succeeded in building a society characterized by openness, that is constantly developing in an atmosphere of tolerance and calm dialogue. The Jordanian people have participated in the process of construction through their responsible exercise of democracy which was disrupted only by the circumstances that emerged following the war of June 1967. Now, following the decision of Jordan to sever its legal and administrative ties with the occupied West Bank, in conformity with Palestinian and Arab wishes, Parliament has resumed its work in an atmosphere of openness and full democracy. We are determined to safeguard and develop this democracy until it reaches a high level of maturity, takes root and embraces every facet of life in our society.

This development took place at a time of universal and distinctive turning towards democracy as exemplifed by the recent transformations in Eastern Europe which came as an expression of the yearning of the various nations in that region for the enjoyment of their freedom and to march forward in the process of social and economic development of their countries. While we look forward to the success of our democratic experiment, we hope that the climate of freedom and popular participation will be enhanced throughout the world to encompass all States and peoples who yearn to exercise their right to be free from pressure, dependence and hegemony.

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The successive crises experienced by the Middle East region over the past decades, have hindered the development of this vital part of the world, despite the abundance of wealth therein. This has engendered a feeling of frustration and bitterness among the region's people. The failure to find comprehensive and lasting solutions to those crises has created a state of constant tension in the area accompanied by a general psychological climate characterized by the feeling of grievance and of being targeted. This has seriously aggravated the socio-economic complexities of the situation in the region.

Indeed, the entire region has become a fertile soil for all sorts of extremism. If we are to come to grips with such a situation, our first priority should be the recognition of the right of the region's peoples to a life of freedom and dignity. This in turn requires that earnest efforts be made towards the creation of a suitable climate based on the comprehensiveness and universality of human rights and on the adherence to international legitimacy as enshrined by the Charter of the United Nations and its resolutions.

Despite the injustice and the frustration suffered by the peoples of the Middle East region, they remain all the more anxious to enhance the role of the United Nations and to strengthen it in all spheres, especially where that role is concerned with peace-making and peace-keeping.

The end of the cold war has engendered the hope that the absence of rivalry between the super-Powers would lead to focusing all efforts on working within the framework of the United Nations. However, there are indications that certain Powers may tend to deal with the recent positive developments with a sense of victory and see in those developments room for increasing their own gains by attempting to impose their will on other States. While our region and its peoples have paid a heavy price for the rivalry between the super-Powers during the cold war, they look forward to seeing the end of the cold war lead to putting an end to

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polarization once and for all and completely eliminating all attempts at hegemony and exploitation in a way that would spread the benefits of international détente to all of humanity and would lead to the supremacy of the principles of law, justice and equality in this world.

Nowadays, our region and the entire world live in a state of extreme tension as a result of the crisis in the Gulf. Jordan has called for and worked towards the settlement of this crisis in a way that conforms to the principles of the League of Arab States and halt the continuing drift towards a military explosion which threatens the security of the region, puts it face to face with certain catastrophe and endangers international peace and security in the process.

Out of his sense of the danger besetting the region and its peoples, His Majesty King Hussein - from the very outset of the crisis - has made and continues to make, together with other Arab leaders, sincere and strenuous efforts in search of a peaceful solution to this crisis.

Jordan, as a civilized country that respects its obligations under the Charter of the United Nations, does not and cannot approve of the resort to force as a way of solving differences between States, nor does it accept the occupation of the territory of others, nor does it support or recognize any demographic or political changes resulting from war in our area or anywhere else in the world. Therefore, Jordan did not recognize the decision to annex Kuwait. Jordan has called and continues to call for the restoration of legitimacy in this Arab country through withdrawal therefrom and followed by finding a permanent solution to the differences between Iraq and Kuwait within an Arab context.

It is regrettable that the efforts made to solve the crisis at its beginning, within its regional context, have not been given sufficient opportunity and support. Some have even tried to thwart those efforts, which led to a quick worsening of the situation in a way that brought about a mutual escalation. That

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escalation, in turn, increased the rigidity of positions and put the whole region face to face with very bleak prospects. Now, several weeks after the breakout of the crisis, we are all the more convinced that a solution will come only through sincere and serious efforts by the Arab Staes - efforts which should be given international support and backing in order to avoid a tragedy whose effects will not be confined to one party alone.

This does not mean that we see a contradiction between what we and other Arab States and others are calling for - namely, that the settlement should be found within a Pan-Arab context - and the efforts that may be made by the international community - of which we are a part - in a United Nations context and in accordance with its Charter. We believe that those two efforts should complement and facilitate one another.

The fact that we live in the Middle East region makes us more sensitive to the dangers inherent in an explosion of the situation there in view of the weapons of mass destruction that exist in the region, whether in the hands of regional parties or those that were brought in with the huge foreign military build-up which has continued since the start of the crisis. This constitutes an additional incentive not to spare any effort in trying to save the peoples of the region and their future generations from the dangers of an armed cnflict, which, if it were to take place, would acquire unpredictable and unimaginable dimensions.

We hope that everybody will appreciate that we have not taken our position on this crisis and its dnagerous ramifications in order to please one party or another. We took our position in keeping with our principles and our determination to safeguard the security and safety of the countries and the peoples of the region. In this context we cannot but express our astonishment at the nervous reactions - of which we hear and whose effects we feel - to our principled stand, which rejects the occupation of the territory of others by force, while at the same

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time we continue to work towards a peaceful and honourable solution to this crisis. We are directly affected by the severe negative consequences of this crisis in a way that does not make it possible for us either to ignore it or look at it with indifference.

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Our commitment to the Security Council and its resolutions is a matter dictated by our adherence to the Charter. We cannot do that selectively or seasonally. Jordan has declared its adherence to the recent resolutions of the Security Council on the crisis. Hence, our implementation of the Security Council resolution imposing sanctions on Iraq, in spite of its devastating effects on our national economy, which threaten Jordan now and in the future in all walks of life.

We were the first State to request consultations with the Security Council regarding the particular economic difficulties which will arise as a result of our compliance with Security Council resolution 661 (1990), in accordance with Article 50 of the Charter. It is unfortunate that there are some who want to use this as a means to exercise pressure on us and compel us to support positions and policies that we believe will bring destruction to the region.

We hope that the international community will appreciate the major difficulties that our economy faces as a result of the crisis. In addition to the burdens resulting from our compliance with Security Council resolution 661 (1990), we have started to suffer deteriorating conditions as a result of humanitarian problems that beset Jordanians working in Kuwait and other places who have lost all of their belongings and are returning home in great numbers.

Jordan also faces the influx of hundreds of thousands of persons of other nationalities coming from Iraq and Kuwait. Helping these vast numbers of people creates very heavy burdens which our economy cannot withstand. It is regrettable that all this happens at a time when we face a situation very similar to a state of siege.

Jordan, in the face of the crisis and its overall effects, has no choice but to continue making efforts, together with Arab and other States, to prevent a military confrontation and prepare the ground for creating a climate conducive to

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reaching a permanent solution to the crisis that will guarantee the interests of all parties and enable them to shoulder their responsibilities towards the region and its resources, which we recognize as being important to human civilization, in such a way as to ensure the achievement and maintenance of peace in the region, free from all formulae and pretexts for foreign presence. We emphasize that sincere, objective and unbiased Arab participation must be an integral part of any solution offered by the United Nations for this crisis, because we firmly believe that any solution imposed from outside the region will have no chance of success whatsoever.

As for the other side of the Middle East region, despite the passing of 23 years since its adoption by the Security Council, another resolution, namely resolution 242 (1967), remains unimplemented. Israel, to this very day, continues to occupy the territories from which the Security Council demanded that it should withdraw. The Palestinian people continue to live under a most brutal kind of colonialism, despite numerous resolutions adopted by the Security Council condemning various aspects of that colonialism - from the annexation of Arab Jerusalem and the Syrian Golan Heights, to the establishment of settlements on Palestinian territories and other acts of oppression, including the deportation of Palestinians from their land, as part of a scheme designed to vacate the land of its people - none of those resolutions has found its way to implementation. Israel has found friends willing not only to help it in not implementing the resolutions of the Security Council, but also in hindering the Security Council's work and paralysing its ability to take decisions on the subject, thus making it difficult for the Council merely to convene, if only to discuss the situation in the occupied territories.

This encouraged Israel to persist in its colonialist plans, the themes and contents of which are no longer championed by extremist or marginal groups, but

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have become the officially declared policy of the Israeli Government. The policy guidelines that constitute the platform of the present Government in Israel, as announced this past June, state that:

"the eternal right of the Jewish people in Eretz Israel is not subject to question. It is intertwined with its right to peace and security".

Bearing in mind that the definition of the so-called Eretz Israel includes at least the State of Israel and the Palestinian territories occupied in 1967, it becomes clear that Israel has thus negated the very foundation on which all the peace efforts of the past two decades were based, namely, the formula for exchanging the occupied territories for peace.

Israel has also seen in the recent international developments an opportunity to effect a sweeping and definitive demographic change in the occupied territories by limiting the options open to Jews emigrating from the Soviet Union and ensuring that their only destination would be Israel, in preparation for resettling them in the occupied territories when conditions become propitious. It should also be recalled that Israel's Prime Minister, Yitzhak Shamir, has already declared that:

"immigration is a big matter which requires the existence of a big Israel".

While recognizing that the freedom to emigrate from the Soviet Union and other Eastern European States was the result of internal developments in those societies, one should not, however, fail to remember the tremendous pressures and continuous efforts exerted by Israel and its supporters to ensure that all emigrants go to Israel which regards them as a major tool in carrying out its expansionist schemes.

Thus, while we welcome the recent positive developments in the Soviet Union and the East European States, we are of the view that making the Palestinian people bear the consequences of that immigration to their land is another historic injustice to them, which is even in contravention of the very texts and instruments

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on which the right to immigration is based, particularly in the Helsinki Final Act and the agreements pertaining thereto, which include the right of a person to leave his country and return to it. Therefore, it is only logical that the Palestinians should question the legitimacy of the immigration of citizens of other States to their land, when they are being expelled from that very land and never allowed to return.

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In the absence of a peaceful, comprehensive and durable solution to the question of Palestine and the Arab-Israeli conflict, the continuation of this immigration constitutes a violation of the rights of the Palestinian people to their national homeland and a threat to the national security of neighbouring States. Ultimately, it will encourage the ruling circles in Israel to rid the occupied territories of their indigenous inhabitants and replace them with the large numbers of immigrants, particularly since the limited natural resources of the area could severely limit its capacity to absorb those immigrants, thus increasing the possibility of an Israeli plan of mass expulsion of Palestinians from their homeland.

Ever since their national tragedy began, the Palestinian people have shown that it is impossible for them to abandon their legitimate rights. The Palestinian people have continued to confront the repressive Israeli machinery with endless sacrifices in order to achieve their goal of self-determination and national independence on their soil, like all other peoples. Their struggle reached a peak in the past three years, through their continuing popular uprising, the intifadah, against the Israeli occupation which, in dealing with the intifadah, unmasked the real face of Israel and laid bare its unfounded claims to democracy and respect for human rights. The Palestinian people have also proved that the logic of might and the desire for expansion dominate Israeli thinking, which still regards the intifadah as a matter of security, rather than a political issue representing the revolt of a people aspiring after independence, a people with whom Israel must come to terms in order to find an appropriate political settlement. Against this backdrop, Israeli occupation constitutes an anomaly, indeed, an anachronism, in this era which is witnessing the end of colonialism in a budding atmosphere of freedom and democracy.

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It is regrettable that the peace process in the Middle East should have come to a complete standstill even before the crisis in the Gulf began, and that Israel and its supporters are counting on the continuation of this crisis in the Gulf to enable them to reap certain benefits, foremost among which is a retreat from the search for a peaceful solution to the question of Palestine. It is noteworthy, however, that Israel and its supporters are the parties that are most enthusiastic for a military showdown and call for that showdown as a means of ending the Gulf crisis.

That crisis has revealed the dangers that may result from a continued deterioration of the situation in the Middle East. These are dangers with far-reaching, devastating effects that transcend the boundaries of the region. Accordingly, there is today, more than ever before, a need for implementing Security Council resolutions. Those resolutions constitute the legal and political basis for any peaceful settlement in the region. The world is nearly unanimous in declaring that the appropriate means to achieve such a settlement, in an honourable and lasting manner, is through an international peace conference in which all the parties to the conflict, as well as the five permanent members of the Security Council would participate, especially since the state of international détente has presumably removed this idea from the sphere of rivalry between the super-Powers.

Recent developments have demonstrated that peace will not prevail in this world simply by ending the rivalry between the super-Powers and by establishing détente between them. They have also demonstrated that unresolved crises do not automatically disappear with the passage of time. Rather, they tend to be aggravated and become more complex. The same developments also show that using double or contradictory political, legal and moral standards does not serve the cause of justice and peace in this world. What our region needs most today is a

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single standard governing relations between its States under the umbrella of international legitimacy, free from selectivity, in order to bring the movement of this region into harmony, rather than in contradiction with, positive developments in our world. In this context, we view the proposals of His Excellency President François Mitterrand of France, made in his speech from this podium two days ago, and the Soviet proposal to hold a conference for peace in the area as ideas which deserve careful consideration. We in Jordan shall, as always, remain totally ready to co-operate with the United Nations and with our friends in working for a peaceful solution to the problems of the region, so that its States and peoples may, after all their suffering, enjoy living in freedom and dignity, be able to determine their future and contribute, on the basis of equality and partnership, to forming a new world order, so that peace and justice may go hand in hand, since neither can prevail without the other.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.